



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENERGY**

Richland Operations  
Office



**CH2MHILL**

**DOE News Release**

**Media Contact:**

Geoff Tyree, DOE

(509) 376-4171, [Geoffrey.Tyree@rl.doe.gov](mailto:Geoffrey.Tyree@rl.doe.gov)

Dee Millikin, CHPRC

(509) 376-1297, [Dee\\_Millikin@rl.gov](mailto:Dee_Millikin@rl.gov)

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**Workers Exceed Goal for Removing Groundwater Contamination**

*Over 500 Pounds of Hexavalent Chromium Removed, 6 Months Ahead of Schedule*

RICHLAND, Wash. – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M HILL) announced today that workers have exceeded DOE's annual goal of removing 500 pounds (220 kilograms) of hexavalent chromium from groundwater near the Columbia River at the Hanford Site in southeast Washington state. The annual goal was for fiscal year 2013, which runs from October 2012 to September 2013.

"Our goal is to eliminate the risk of contaminated groundwater reaching the Columbia River, and we are making significant progress," said Federal Project Director Briant Charboneau, DOE Richland Operations Office. "Hanford Site groundwater entering the river does not pose a risk to human health. We are operating groundwater treatment systems along the river to prevent risk to aquatic species that live in the gravels below the river where Hanford groundwater enters the river."

CH2M HILL has helped DOE double the amount of chromium removed from groundwater each year by applying its global groundwater treatment expertise to Hanford cleanup. The contractor's approach optimizes treatment systems, along with a network of wells and barriers.

"I challenged our workers to find ways to enhance our cleanup capabilities, and they continue to deliver," said Bob Popielarczyk, CH2M HILL vice president of Groundwater Remediation for the Hanford Site. "Every amount of contamination removed is significant to the cleanup mission. Just a small amount of hexavalent chromium with a weight equivalent to one grain of salt could contaminate eight gallons of water above aquatic standards, which is more stringent than drinking water standard."

CH2M HILL is responsible for treating all of Hanford's contaminated groundwater, including areas with hexavalent chromium contamination, or plumes, covering a five-square-mile area along the Columbia River. The plumes are equivalent in area to 2,400 football fields. Since the first treatment systems for chromium began operating in the mid-1990s, Hanford contractors have removed a total of 5,700 pounds (2,600 kilograms) of chromium from groundwater.

The contamination resulted from Hanford's plutonium production era for the nation's defense. Planned and unplanned releases of chemicals from the site's plutonium production reactors contaminated a large area of soil along the river. Over time, the chemicals seeped into the groundwater, which flows toward the river.

The Columbia River is a vital resource and habitat for wildlife, including salmon. The river is also a resource for drinking water, agriculture and recreation.

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*The Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office is responsible for several major cleanup projects on the Hanford Site, including cleanout and demolition of the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, demolition of excess facilities, excavation of contaminated soil and solid waste, and treatment of contaminated groundwater, as well as Hanford Site infrastructure. The office oversees approximately \$1 billion in annual funding for Hanford Site work that is conducted by a Federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,500 personnel. Visit [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov).*

*Headquartered near Denver, Colo., employee-owned CH2M HILL is a global leader in engineering, procurement, construction, management and operations for government, civil, industrial and energy clients. With \$6.4 billion in revenue and more than 25,000 employees, CH2M HILL is an industry-leading program management, construction management and design firm, as ranked by Engineering News-Record (2008). The firm's work is concentrated in the areas of energy, water, transportation, environmental, nuclear and industrial facilities. The firm has long been recognized as a most-admired company and leading employer, including being named by FORTUNE as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For and one of America's Most Admired Companies (2008). Visit [www.ch2mhill.com](http://www.ch2mhill.com).*